

Hon. members realize that this point has already been proposed twice by way of a question of privilege. Last week, on either Thursday or Friday, a like motion was proposed by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and a similar motion was proposed earlier today. When the first motion was advanced for the consideration of the Chair, the suggestion was that the fact that the report was not being published by the government was in itself a breach of the privileges of the House, and that the matter should be investigated by a committee.

After hearing argument, the Chair reached the conclusion that it was not a question of privilege; that, basically, if a document which has been commissioned by the government is not made public and the opposition wants the document to be made public, it can present a motion for the production of papers in the normal way. This was perhaps a harsh suggestion, and I realize it has serious practical difficulties; but the rule is there. I suggested to hon. members that on this basis there was no question of privilege.

The subsequent question arose as to whether some of the information contained in the report might—as the hon. member for Skeena puts it in a very positive way—have been made public either by the government or some other source, and that that in itself is a question of privilege which ought to be investigated. There again, I have very serious doubts. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre and the hon. member for Skeena suggest that in this way the operation of Parliament has been hampered; that hon. members have been hampered in the discharge of their responsibilities as Members of Parliament in that information not yet given to the House has in some way found its way to the press or the public.

Does that constitute a question of privilege? The worst case that might be made by the hon. member would be that there has been deliberate misinformation by the minister. If this were so, then I suggest to hon. members we might have a question of privilege if there were a substantive motion directed against the individual or directed against the minister as a member of the House. If there were a specific charge, the matter might be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. That is not the subject matter of the motion proposed now. The motion is simply that an inquiry should be launched to investigate how

Interim Report on Non-Medical Use of Drugs this information leaked out, if it is a fact that information has actually been conveyed to members of the press.

I fail to see how this can be a question of privilege. There are a number of precedents indicating to hon. members that this type of situation cannot be treated as a question of privilege. Hon. members may remember that last year the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) raised a question of privilege on the alleged advance publication of information relating to Dorval airport. It was suggested by the hon. member for Calgary North, who was supported by a number of hon. members, that this constituted a question of privilege and that the matter should be referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections for investigation. This is precisely what the hon. member wanted to do; he wanted the committee to ask questions, to interview witnesses and ascertain how this information had got into the hands of the public. This is what the hon. member for Skeena would like done in connection with this particular alleged leak of information.

If hon. members will consult *Journals* of the House of Commons for Monday, March 31, 1969, they will see that the Chair at that time had painstakingly gone through many precedents, had studied the precedents in the British House and had come to the conclusion that this could not be the subject of a question of privilege. I refer hon. members to two cases which are particularly relevant. One is the Thomas case, where a motion was made for an investigation under the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act. After debate on that motion, it was resolved on the main question "that the report be accepted," etc. The relevant point is that the matter was not considered at any time by way of a question of privilege.

Then in the Dalton case there was a suggestion that information had been leaked out. The President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) smiles, but he may not be thinking of the same Dalton.

An hon. Member: They are all in the same Camp.

Mr. Speaker: I am referring to the British Chancellor of the Exchequer of that time. The decision was the same, that the matter was not considered as a question of privilege. The conclusion was reached that the motion for study of the circumstances surrounding the leak of information could not be considered